

BELCHERTOWN PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 6, 2016

Present: Chris Daley, Nancy Kwiatkowski, Wilbur Quirk, Bill Vosburgh, Tilo Schiffer, Nick O'Connor, Rob Opalenik, and Linda Racicot, John Soja

Meeting was called to order by Bill at 6:16 p.m.

REVIEW MINUTES

Minutes from March 9, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Nancy made a motion to accept the minutes from the March meeting, *Tilo seconded, and motion passed 5-0-0.*

GUEST: Donna Spraggon

OLD BUSINESS

>Wilbur stated CPC has approved funds for creating a handicap parking area at Parson's Field. This will allow for renovations to fix the historical stone wall.

>Rob asked if Nick would explain what the intent of the requested \$10,000 was going to be used for at Foley field.

>Nick stated he sent a letter explaining we should look to develop two additional fields at the Foley field area. \$30,000 in seed money was agreed by Nick and Gary to get started and the intent is to develop the plan in coordination with the Rec Department and Committee. The timing to get the warrant article and subsequent budget discussions with the Finance Committee resulted in reducing the amount to \$10,000, with the intent of developing a better plan before the annual town meeting in May.

>Rob expressed he should have been brought into the discussion. His concern is \$30,000 is not enough funds to make a significant difference in the area. There is no water or electricity at the field which should be the priority. There would be no reason to recondition and create new fields if there is no irrigation for grass to grow. The piping that currently exists is no good. His recommendation would be to have the Highway Dept. dig a trench for piping to be laid from the Tadgell building or dig a well at the Foley area. Rob said he is unsure that the \$10,000 could be spent on a water source. The Article (#15) specifically states;
"To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from free cash in the treasury a sum of money to be used toward the design and construction of soccer fields and/or hiking trails at Foley Field, and all costs incidental and related thereto"

>Nick said the \$10,000 is a starting point and will continue efforts to receive funding. He added, he will look into exactly what the article states and have it changed if needed.

>Rob said he spoke with Nelson Garrow & Sons and their recommendation would be to purchase fill and level the entire area. Rob agreed he felt that would be best. Rob asked if the \$10,000 came from free cash.

>Nick stated he will find out where the \$10,000 is obligated

>Rob suggested that the Committee go to Foley Field and see if they feel a design is necessary

>Nick asked if the entrance road is going to be paved

>Rob stated that the Highway Dept. will be grading the gravel for the time being because the tar grinding is on hold. Rob said he walked the area with Lee Anne from Conservation and there will be environmental restriction with improving the area. According to Lee Anne, heavy vehicles for field work are not allowed within 100' of the water.

Permit expires 2017 but Rob feels we can work with that.

>Bill suggested that we focus on irrigation

>Nick agreed, water should be a high priority

>Rob said the article includes improving the hiking trail and the Committee may want to consider that. He added, the boy scouts have consistently worked to clean up the trail. The snowmobile club had put a bridge in years ago, using telephone poles, which now can not be removed. A duck hunting sign was posted a few years ago that only allows hunters in the area from dawn to 8:30 a.m.

>Nick said a plan should be in place for water and electric infrastructure

>Rob said Little League is concerned that their baseball diamond will be removed and Rob explained it was discussed that the diamond would be relocated. A new diamond would be created before the existing one was removed or Little League would be provided with another field while a new diamond was formed. Rob assured Little League a plan would be discussed with them before anything happened

NEW BUSINESS

>Nick stated the design on route 202 (State School property) has store fronts facing route 202. The plan needs additional reviewing.

>Rob said regarding the tennis court, he spoke with Steve (Highway Dept) and he felt the courts should be removed and start with a fresh surface. He would suggest saving the lights and fence, removing the asphalt, which needs to be contracted out which will involve Digsafe. A concern is that electrical wires run across the court underground. Their recommendation is to submit for CPC money with two projects, demolish with a plan for something on the site in the future.

>Wilbur cautioned there was not going to be a large amount of funds available.

>Nick suggested leaving the bathroom facility next to the courts. The Patrick Center does not include the tennis court

>Rob suggested that parking be considered for that area

>Nick informed the Committee that the Day School's lease was not renewed. The Family Center could be moving in.

>Rob said the Town has a \$600,000 deficit.

>John stated Belchertown.org/recreation was created for those who have had trouble finding our website. He is now reviewing 3 software companies; Tyler Industries, My Rec and Rec Desk looking into online payments. The cost to purchase software, setup and annual dues will be approximately \$4,000. The software will replace the existing Recreation Dept. software with multiple options

>Nick suggested looking at surrounding town to see what software they are using

>Rob commented that Lisa Banner will need to communicate with the software company to determine how credit card payments and deposits work and if it's something the town can comply with

>Nick said Shane Sullivan from Global Premier Soccer has contacted him. The idea is they will invest and partner to create fields. This expansion would be a new area not an existing field.

>Rob stated he has communicated with this group in the past and is concerned that with this organization investing funds, they may not accommodate us when we would like use of the field.

>Bill informed the Committee he has volunteered as a Recreation Committee Member to be on the select board for a new Recreation Director. The select board will consist of a Recreation Committee member, a School Committee member, Steve from the Highway Dept., Gary Brougham and 3 members of the community

DIRECTORS REPORT

>Linda stated registrations for softball have increased and the Recreation Dept. has 2-3/4 grade, 2-5/6 grade and 2-7/8 grade softball teams this season. There is 1 Sandy Koufax team who will be entering the John L Sullivan league. Instructors are now sending in their information for summer programs. There will be several new programs being offered this summer including our Summer D.A.Y.S. program which slightly changed from the past and now offers children entering 1st grade to register along with extending the hours to 4:00p.m. We are looking for a new dance instructor

>Nancy suggested advertising through the schools for instructors

>Nick suggested looking at Leisure Services to see what they offer

>Rob requested the support of the Committee members to attend the Town Meeting on May 9 for the Patrick Center purchase and the rehabilitation of the Chestnut Hill outdoor basketball court

Next meeting is Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 6:15 p.m. in the Recreation Conference Room.

Tilo made a motion to adjourn. *Chris seconded, motion passed 5-0-0.*

Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.